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Cancer Study Offers New Hope

The mysteries of cancer seem to keep broadening, as scientists continue their investigation of a growing list of possible suspects. Witness the recent report by the U. S. Public Health Service showing that lung cancer death rates show wide variation from city to city throughout the United States.

On the other hand, press reports from the recent International Cancer Congress, with top scientists from all over the world participating, indicate the growing belief among scientists that viruses play a key role in cancer causation, and that real progress is being made in the search for the causes of the disease.

The virus theory assumes increasing importance, the scientists tell us, because, if correct, it holds the hope that a protective vaccine developed against cancer.

There is a moral in the development of the virus theory—for scientists and the general public.

It wasn't too many years ago that the few scientists who believed in the virus theory of causation had trouble scraping up the funds they needed to conduct their research. Somehow they did, and today their work is being widely recognized.

During these years, the public has been deluged with reports about things that were said to cause cancer. Josh Billings once said, "It is better to know nothing than to know what ain't so."

It seems clear today that scientists do not know the basic causes of cancer of any kind. Yet there is hope for an eventual solution because scientific knowledge and perspective have grown immensely.

—U. S. Press Association.

PRINTERS' INK
August 10, 1962

U. S. smoking study starts

Tobacco advertisers, warily awaiting the study by the federal government on the effects of cigarette smoking, finally got the word that the study is ready to go. Surgeon General Luther Terry last week announced that a two-phase study on the dangers of smoking will start in September. It will go on through 1963, at least.

With so much at stake—including the possible recommendations, depending on the findings of the study, that stringent regulations be imposed on cigarette ads—the government is obviously moving slowly. Accordingly, the first phase of the study, dealing with the nature and scope of the health hazard, will take at least six months. The second stage, which will have to do with "recommendations for action," will go on at length, after the first phase is concluded.

So far 150 names have been considered for membership in the study group. Some 12, it is expected, will be picked for the job. Conclusion: Cigarette advertisers will have ample time to cope with any adverse judgments that may arise from the federal probe. As things look now, it will be nearly two years, before the government arrives at any far-reaching decision on the effects of smoking.

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